

MAY 6, 1970

Dear President Armstrong,

We write this letter to you in hopes that two things can be accomplished. The academic pressure on the students which will result if the strike ends must be clarified in order that the strike can maintain its momentum and credibility among the intellectual community. Furthermore, we wish to impress upon you the importance of giving complete support to the national strike in which many schools have already closed indefinitely. The intellectual establishment is using a shock tactic on the administration in Washington to induce a positive effort to end the war. Shock tactics of this sort are very effective, but can only be used once. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that this strike be carried out as completely as possible.

The strike as it has been proposed could be academically critical to the students because of its ambiguities with respect to the uniformity of college policies. It would appear that the one week suspension of classes does not allow students to become involved in the issues at hand more than superficially.

The faculty are given the option to hold classes or not as the students do attend them. Faculty can also effectively hold students responsible for material covered in those classes as well as assignments made before and during the suspension, such as tests, papers, etc. Then, in effect we are compounding two weeks of work into one with a five day space in between to devote to the problem of ending the war. This problem is quite a big one and should not be taken lightly. In all its ten-odd years of prominent existence it is more unsolved now than at its inception. How can anything constructive be accomplished by the intellectual community towards stopping the war if all of its members, faculty and students alike, are threatened with academic reverberations should they try

to participate effectively.

In the decision of Middlebury's role in the national movement, we feel strongly that the following discussion must be considered. If any progress can be made in this five day suspension period, it would be beneficial to the movement of ending the war to continue all present efforts. Conversely, any realistic progress won't be made in this period unless our academic responsibilities are removed, or at least clarified. We support the national movement because the intellectual establishment has the very real power to exert political pressure on the present government. A concerted effort at this time by colleges and universities will be most effective.

We urge the suspension of classes for the remainder of the semester. Completion of the remaining two weeks of classes and week of exams should be made optional and unofficial. The college should remain open to enable students to either study or pursue their present courses of political action. Those students interested in neither of the two above possibilities should be allowed to do as they please.

We must be active to end the war.

Sincerely,

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